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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Office of  
Public Affairs

# Selected Speeches and News Releases

April 11 - April 17, 1991

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Public Affairs

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## FOREST SERVICE PROPOSES CHANGES IN BELOW-COST TIMBER SALE POLICY

WASHINGTON, April 11—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is seeking public comments on proposed changes in the agency's commercial timber sale program that would allow commercial timber sales only on national forests where program revenues exceed costs, or, if not, where long-term benefits of the timber sale program outweigh costs.

John Beuter, deputy assistant secretary of agriculture for natural resources and environment, said the proposal addresses the issue of below-cost timber sale programs, which are defined in the proposal as those for which costs have exceeded revenues for three consecutive years.

Under the proposal, each forest supervisor would annually review their forest's timber sales program to determine if the program is meeting the proposed criteria. If the review indicates costs are not being offset by long-term benefits, then the policy would require amendments to the forest plan to assure that policy criteria are being met. This amendment process would include full opportunity for public involvement.

Beuter said that all national forests, regardless of the financial situation of their sales programs, will carefully analyze and embrace opportunities to reduce and eliminate inefficiencies through a combination of reducing costs and enhancing revenues.

In fiscal 1990 the Forest Service produced \$1,375,471,000 in revenue from a 10.5 billion board feet harvest. In its annual report on the timber sale program, the Forest Service said revenues exceeded operating expenses for the year by \$629,721,000. Ninety percent of the volume harvested was from forests where revenues exceeded costs.

The proposal is scheduled for publication April 16 in the Federal Register. Comments may be submitted within 60 calendar days following publication to: F. Dale Robertson, Chief, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 96090, Washington, D.C. 20090-6090.

Denver James (202) 475-3781

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## USDA INVESTIGATING DISEASE THREAT TO POULTRY INDUSTRY

WASHINGTON, April 12—A pet bird bought near a swap market in Spring Valley, Calif., last month was confirmed today as infected with exotic Newcastle disease, prompting the U.S. Department of Agriculture to repeat a warning against buying smuggled birds.

"So far, we know one two-month-old yellownape Amazon parrot is involved," said James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "The vendor had three similar birds for sale at the time of the purchase. We're trying to find him to see if the other birds he sold are infected."

Exotic Newcastle disease is especially deadly to commercial poultry, and an outbreak that spread from imported pet birds to poultry farms in California caused losses of \$56 million between 1971 and 1974. Pet birds which apparently have not come through USDA approved quarantine stations have come down with the disease almost every year since 1974 although no outbreaks have infected commercial poultry flocks.

"We do not suspect any spread to poultry flocks this time, either," Glosser said.

The diseased bird was bought on March 23 by a resident of Las Vegas, Nev. When it showed signs of tremors and nervousness, the owner consulted a veterinarian. The veterinarian found the bird hopelessly ill, humanely destroyed it, and contacted state and federal animal health officials for assistance in obtaining a laboratory diagnosis.

The virus of exotic Newcastle disease was confirmed at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

APHIS is charged with keeping out foreign animal diseases, such as exotic Newcastle disease, which is known scientifically as velogenic viscerotropic Newcastle disease. Almost any bird, especially birds from species of the parrot family, can carry the infection.

Glosser said birds smuggled into the United States are a serious threat to our poultry and bird populations. These birds may not show any signs of exotic Newcastle disease for some time. Smuggled yellownape Amazon parrots have been found to be infected more than any other parrots.

"The best policy to avoid financial loss and risk to other bird owners and the poultry industry is to buy pet birds only from known, reputable dealers," Glosser said. "If an imported parrot seems to be a bargain, the buyer should suspect smuggling. Birds imported legitimately have

circular, stainless steel APHIS-approved leg bands engraved with three letters and three numbers."

Exotic birds can enter the country safely and legally from most foreign locations. The birds must be accompanied by appropriate permits, be examined by APHIS inspectors and undergo a minimum 30-day quarantine at one of six APHIS facilities or at APHIS-supervised, privately owned quarantine stations. During quarantine, APHIS tests the birds to assure they are free of Newcastle disease.

Details on rules governing bird imports and how to avoid the purchase of smuggled birds can be found in the APHIS pamphlet, "Importing a Pet Bird." For a free copy, write Publications Distribution, USDA-APHIS, Room G-110 Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573

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## USDA DECLARES PUERTO RICO FREE OF BRUCELLOSIS

WASHINGTON, April 12—Puerto Rico has been declared free of cattle brucellosis, joining 30 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands recognized for eradicating the disease, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture official.

James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said, "I want the people of Puerto Rico to know that their hard work in eradicating brucellosis is appreciated by everyone involved in the campaign to eradicate this disease from America's cattle herds."

Disease-free status is attained when no cattle in a state are found to be infected for 12 consecutive months and other program requirements are met. Class A status means that no more than 0.25 percent of the herds are infected. To date, 16 states are classified class A and only 4 states remain class B, which has a higher than 0.25 but lower than 1.5 percent rate of infection.

Brucellosis, sometimes called "Bang's disease," is an infectious, contagious bacterial disease that causes abortion, impaired fertility and reduced milk production in cattle.

Humans can be infected if they drink unpasteurized milk from infected animals. Brucellosis infection in humans can also occur if people do not observe safety techniques when handling aborted fetuses.

Nationwide, cattle producers still incur annual production losses of more than \$15 million because of brucellosis. In 1990, there were over 1 million cattle operations in the United States.

An interim rule designating Puerto Rico as free of cattle brucellosis became effective April 4. Comments on the action will be accepted if they are received on or before June 10. An original and three copies of written comments referring to Docket 91-040 should be sent to: Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 866 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782. Comments may be inspected at USDA, Rm. 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

Margaret Webb (301) 436-7799

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## **DRUG-HUNTING PROBES MAY SPEED TOMORROW'S SAFETY TESTING OF MEATS, POULTRY**

**WASHINGTON**—New, high-tech probes pinpoint residues of certain drugs in meat and poultry more quickly than current tests, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

USDA research chemist David L. Brandon said the experimental probes he is now building in his Albany, Calif., laboratory are built using certain antibodies cloned from the immune system of laboratory mice.

Brandon and colleagues at USDA's Agricultural Research Service have completed antibody probes to track four of eight veterinary drugs called benzimidazoles that are monitored by federal food safety inspectors. Ranchers routinely use benzimidazoles to protect their animals from harmful parasitic worms.

According to a story in the latest issue of Agricultural Research magazine, Brandon expects to complete the four remaining probes within a year. When that's done, the new test—if approved by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service—could streamline testing of beef, lamb, pork, chicken and goat meat for benzimidazole residues, he said.

Currently, inspectors at packinghouses ship samples to an FSIS lab in the midwest for testing.

For use at the packinghouse, a test based on the new probes would "have to be exceptionally quick so that it won't stall inspection and

grading," Brandon said. The probes hold the promise of doing this "without compromising accuracy, reliability or reproducibility of results."

In testing more than 3,000 samples of imported and domestically produced meats and poultry each year, FSIS has found no violations of allowable limits for these drugs, according to Brandon. In people, he noted, illness from the residues is not known to occur from eating meat or poultry. FSIS monitors the residues because of potential side effects from high doses of benzimidazoles. Some people suffer dizziness, nausea or other side effects from high doses taken as prescription drugs to fight internal worms.

The new probes—packaged into a convenient kit for packinghouse inspectors—could complement or replace today's technique. FSIS chemists use a high performance liquid chromatograph in their laboratory to scrutinize samples from meat and poultry carcasses.

Brandon said the probes might also speed testing for benzimidazole residues on fresh produce. Growers of fresh fruits and vegetables use one type of benzimidazole to protect crops such as oranges, strawberries, apples, pears and mushrooms from harmful fungi.

The antibody technology, he explained, relies on the immune system of laboratory mice. In nature, antibodies protect mice, as well as humans and other mammals, from invading organisms or other foreign bodies.

When scientists inject a tiny dose of a benzimidazole drug into the mouse, the animal's immune system promptly responds by making a flurry of antibodies. Scientists save only those mouse antibodies that are "monoclonal"—that is, they react exclusively to one compound, in this case benzimidazole. When cells producing these antibodies are fused to other mouse cells that reproduce continuously in test tubes, the newly hybridized cells churn out usable monoclonal antibodies.

The researchers employ these antibodies to hunt for evidence of benzimidazoles in ground-up samples of meat and poultry. A chemical used in the technique provides a color cue that tells the researchers whether the antibodies have located and bonded to any benzimidazoles.

Marcia Wood (415) 559-6070  
Issued: April 16, 1991

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## **USDA/EPA TO ASSIST GROWERS AFFECTED BY AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL RE-EVALUATIONS**

WASHINGTON, April 15—The United States Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are working together to assist growers affected by the accelerated process to re-evaluate existing agricultural chemicals.

EPA is conducting a major review of older pesticides to make sure they meet current scientific standards. Based on changes to the Federal pesticide law (the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, or FIFRA), pesticide registrants must provide EPA with an up-to-date data base for their chemicals. Registrants must also pay fees to EPA to help support this massive reregistration effort.

The FIFRA reregistration requirement, and the anticipated reduction in number of agricultural chemicals available, will impact producers who rely upon chemicals for which there is a limited market, especially those of "minor crops" such as most fruits, vegetables, flowers, and ornamentals.

To help growers and producers, USDA Deputy Secretary Jack Parnell and EPA Assistant Administrator Linda Fisher have convened a Minor Use Work Group to improve how information about pesticide cancellations is communicated to growers and other interested people in a timely fashion.

Growers can call 1-800-262-0216 Monday-Friday (9 a.m. to 3 p.m. EDT) for more information on the reregistration of minor use chemicals. This number will connect them with personnel operating USDA's National Agriculture Pesticide Impact Assessment Program.

The Minor Use Work Group also is evaluating alternatives for reducing the impact of reregistration requirements.

USDA and EPA are supporting the development of a database to keep current the registration and reregistration information for pesticides on a crop-by-crop basis. They are also taking steps to set up an early notification network to keep growers and any other potential registrants advised of the current status of pesticides important to their crops.

In most instances, chemicals or their uses are being dropped by their registrants for economic, marketing, or other reasons and not because they are known to pose unacceptable risks to human health or the environment.

Under the provisions of reregistration, registrants have the option of

deleting pesticide uses by voluntarily withdrawing registration for product uses that are not economically attractive to continue producing. In those cases EPA has the responsibility to cancel the registration or crop use.

Pesticide uses have already been dropped for many fruit and vegetable crops. Many more uses are expected to be dropped in the near future. Efforts are underway to allow for the reregistration of vital uses and to address the concerns of growers. Some examples include:

- The Inter-Regional Research Project #4 (IR-4 Program), based at Rutgers University, has been able to complete the necessary studies and residue testing to support a number of minor use registrations and will continue with an accelerated effort.
- EPA is working with IR-4 and USDA to develop a schedule for submitting reregistration data, and to improve its system for transferring information to IR-4 on registration status of pesticides, data requirements, and deadlines for data submission.
- Some chemicals discontinued by one company have been submitted for reregistration by another.
- Producer groups have become the registrant for some compounds, commonly referred to as third-party registration.

Growers can contact extension specialists, pesticide coordinators in state Departments of Agriculture and the planned user notification system to obtain early warning about the regulatory status of chemicals that are vital to the production of specific crops. The key to dealing with the consequences of reregistration is keeping informed of the reregistration process and following the progress of the chemicals in use.

Al Heier EPA (202) 382-4374  
Al Maruggi USDA (202) 447-5654

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## **AR, IFM, AND CRP FINAL RULES ANNOUNCED**

WASHINGTON, April 16—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced farm program signup provisions of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990.

Details appear in today's Federal Register.

"The 1990 Act is a massive piece of legislation requiring a Herculean effort to be implemented in a timely fashion," said Madigan. "This announcement is the result of many helpful public comments and will allow America's farmers their final planting decisions."

Madigan said the comments on the proposed rules, which were published in the Feb. 26 and March 6 Federal Registers, came from all sectors of the public.

The rules published in today's Federal Register cover issues related to flexibility, commodity Acreage Reduction Programs, the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Integrated Farm Management (IFM) program option. (IFM is a new program to help producers participate in farm programs while adopting resources stewardship practices and conservation systems).

Madigan also announced tentative acceptance of 564,899 acres of cropland into the CRP, at an average cost of \$53.96 per acre.

This acreage is based upon bids of 2,453,686 acres of environmentally sensitive and highly-erodible cropland submitted during the 10th CRP signup. Final data on acreage enrolled in the CRP will be announced after July 15.

"The 1990 Act was written in anticipation of using the CRP to help protect environmentally fragile lands," Madigan said. "Preliminary signup information indicates we have been successful."

The secretary said more than 72,000 of the tentatively-approved CRP acres came from conservation priority area watersheds such as the Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound and the Great Lakes regions. Of this acreage, Madigan said more than 10,000 acres are from high priority watersheds specifically targeted by USDA to improve water quality.

Madigan said producers wishing to participate in the CRP for 1992 should take advantage of the next signup, which will be held July 8-19. This signup will be for 1992 contracts only.

Signup for the commodity acreage reduction and IFM programs will close April 26 as previously scheduled. Those producers who are currently enrolled in the programs but who decide not to participate have until that date to withdraw without penalty.

Acreage Conservation Reserve (ACR) and Conservation Use (CU) for payment provisions that have changed from those published in the proposed rule include the following:

State ASC committees will have full discretion to set the final conservation cover crop seeding date for ACR and CU for payment. June 1 had been the final required seeding date in the proposed rule.

Contiguous and noncontiguous strips that are at least 33 feet wide may be designated as ACR and CU for payment if:

- the strip is in a conservation plan; or
- the strip is planted to a perennial cover.

For 1991 only, the same exceptions to minimum size and width that applied in 1990 will be applicable.

Madigan said the proposed rule would have required strips to be at least 66 feet wide.

ACR for which cost share assistance under the multi-year provisions is provided must be designated as ACR for three consecutive years. The proposed rule would have allowed producers to redesignate ACR ground in the second and third years.

Fruits and vegetables are authorized as locally approved cover only if used for green manure, haying or grazing. The proposed rule would not have allowed such cover.

The following provisions were also published today:

Fruits and vegetables may be planted on flexible acreage if used for green manure, haying or grazing. Adjuki beans, lupin beans and faba beans may be planted on flexible acreage. The proposed rule would not have allowed such plantings on flexible acres.

Other crops designated as ineligible for planting on flexible acreage are peanuts, tobacco, wild rice, trees and nuts. The proposed rule would have allowed these crops to be planted on flexible acres.

Acreage planted to designated minor oilseeds, which is used to determine a producer's 0/92 payment, may be double-cropped if the second crop is also a designated minor oilseed. The proposed rule would have prohibited such double-cropping.

For 1991 only, producers who plant peas and lentils may have such crops considered as planted to a program crop that is enrolled in the 1991

ARP. As in 1990, this credit may not exceed 20 percent of the program crop acreage base. The proposed rule would have prohibited this considered planted credit.

Provisions for determining farm program payment yields when the crop has an irrigated yield have been changed in the final rule to correct for inequities in the proposed rule. The changes permit an operator and owner more flexibility in selecting an irrigated planting history that is representative of their farming operation. Producers will continue to enroll in Acreage Reduction Programs under the procedures spelled out in the proposed rule. However, producers will be notified of their yield history options prior to April 26. Payments will be adjusted, if necessary, at the next payment date.

Madigan also said that under the IFM option the total acreage that may be enrolled in IFM during 1991-95 has been increased from three million to five million acres. The 1991 allocation is one million acres.

Under IFM, 50 percent of resource conserving crops (RCC) devoted to ACR may be hayed and grazed the entire year. Small grains on RCC designated as ACR, except wheat, oats and barley, may be harvested for grain. The proposed rule would have limited haying and grazing on ACR and not allowed the harvest of wheat, oats and barley.

Robert Feist (202) 447-6789

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## USDA REVISES TABLE GRAPE STANDARDS

WASHINGTON, April 16—The U.S. Department of Agriculture will add a grading category—"U.S. No. 1 Institutional"—to the U.S. standards for grades of table grapes (European or Vinifera type), effective April 18.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the new grade has the same requirements as the U.S. No. 1 Table Grape grade, except that bunch weight under the new grade may be between two and five ounces. The minimum weight for the U.S. No. 1 grade is four ounces.

At least 95 percent of packages in a "lot" of the new grade of grape must be legibly stamped "Institutional," to distinguish them from other U.S. table grape grades.

Institutions such as schools and hospitals actually find smaller bunches more practical for their needs, Haley said. "The new grade will benefit institutions seeking to put grapes on their plates," he said.

Table grape standards were last revised in 1987. AMS develops standards at the request of agricultural commodity groups and other interested parties.

Details of the new standards will appear as a final rule in the April 18 Federal Register. Copies may be obtained from the Standardization Section, Fresh Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, rm. 2056-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 447-2185.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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## **ABOUT 1 PERCENT OF U.S. AGRICULTURAL LAND IS FOREIGN-OWNED**

WASHINGTON, April 16—Foreign interests owned 14.45 million acres, or slightly more than 1 percent, of privately owned U.S. agricultural land as of Dec. 31, 1990, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"Foreign ownership climbed 13 percent (1,875,806 acres) from a year earlier," said John Lee, administrator of USDA's Economic Research Service. "Holdings have remained relatively steady from 1981 through 1990, fluctuating around 1 percent of the privately-owned agricultural land in the United States."

About 62 percent of the reported foreign holdings is actually land owned by U.S. firms; however, the law requires firms to register their landholdings as foreign if as little as 10 percent of their common stock is held by foreign investors. The remaining 38 percent of the foreign-held land is owned by investors not affiliated with U.S. firms.

Because of the corporate holdings, an increase in foreign ownership from one year to another does not necessarily represent land newly acquired by foreigners. Nor do the numbers necessarily represent ownership exclusively by foreigners.

A U.S. firm's landholdings can show up as "foreign owned" one year, but not another, as the firm's stock passes in and out of foreign hands.

The land, however, is still owned by the same entity as before, according to Lee.

These and other findings are based on an analysis of reports submitted to USDA under the Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act of 1978. The analysis also revealed:

—The amount of “farmland” (cropland, pasture and rangeland) owned exclusively by foreigners (excluding holdings of U.S. firms) is about three million acres. Forest land accounts for 50 percent of all foreign-owned acreage; cropland, 17 percent; pasture and other agricultural land, 30 percent; and agricultural land not under cultivation, 3 percent.

—Corporations (U.S. and foreign) own 83 percent of the foreign-held acreage; partnerships, 9 percent; and individuals, 6 percent. The remaining 2 percent is held by estates, trusts, associations, institutions and others.

—Japanese investors own 4 percent of the total foreign-held acreage. Investors (including individuals, corporations, partnerships, etc.) from Canada, the United Kingdom, West Germany, France, the Netherlands Antilles and Switzerland own 70 percent of the foreign total.

—The largest foreign-owned acreage, mostly timberland, was reported in Maine. Foreign holdings account for 17 percent of Maine's privately owned agricultural land. These holdings represent about 21 percent of all the reported foreign-owned land nationwide. Four large timber companies own 98 percent of the foreign-held acres in Maine. Two are Canadian, the third is a U.S. company that is partially Canadian-owned, and the fourth is a U.S. company that is partially French-owned.

—Except for Maine, foreign holdings are concentrated in the South (32 percent) and West (33 percent). Rhode Island is the only state with no reported foreign-owned agricultural land.

—Ninety four percent of the foreign-owned acreage will remain in agricultural production, according to the foreign owners. They also reported no plans to change tenancy or rental arrangements on 48 percent of the acres. Some change is planned on 25 percent of the acres. “No response” accounted for 27 percent.

**Table 1—U.S. agricultural landholdings of foreign owners, by State, December 31, 1990**

State	Foreign-owned agricultural land	State	Foreign-owned agricultural land
Acres	Acres		
Alabama	395,629	Nebraska	76,471
Alaska	416	Nevada	173,200
Arizona	329,527	N. Hampshire	220,207
Arkansas	179,283	New Jersey	21,587
California	911,645	New Mexico	855,266
Colorado	539,871	New York	264,274
Connecticut	1,074	N. Carolina	229,225
Delaware	5,870	North Dakota	30,851
Florida	562,752	Ohio	172,303
Georgia	568,360	Oklahoma	29,705
Guam	336	Oregon	649,407
Hawaii	173,767	Pennsylvania	58,490
Idaho	22,966	Puerto Rico	839
Illinois	146,279	R. Island	0
Indiana	60,499	S. Carolina	186,956
Iowa	31,310	S. Dakota	42,882
Kansas	73,329	Tennessee	168,410
Kentucky	84,254	Texas	1,059,539
Louisiana	678,919	Utah	88,927
Maine	3,001,062	Vermont	122,738
Maryland	50,745	Virginia	118,653
Massachusetts	1,934	Washington	373,725
Michigan	202,908	W. Virginia	76,312
Minnesota	220,644	Wisconsin	24,433
Mississippi	461,830	Wyoming	126,196
Missouri	61,130	Total	14,445,741
Montana	508,806		

**Table 2—U.S. agricultural landholdings by country of foreign owner,  
December 31, 1990**

	Number	Number
Interests excl. U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders		
Argentina	12,973	Lebanon
Australia	3,319	Liberia
Austria	55,889	Liechtenstein
Bahamas	34,894	Luxembourg
Bahrain	553	Malaysia
Barbados	117	Mexico
Belgium	63,372	Montserrat
Belize	549	Morocco
Bermuda	72,981	Namibia
Bolivia	11	Netherlands
Brazil	1,161	Netherlands Antilles
British Virgin Islands	70,221	New Zealand
Canada	1,979,913	Nicaragua
Cayman Islands	23,224	Nigeria
Chile	1,556	Norway
China	496	Oman
Colombia	8,722	Pakistan
Costa Rica	13,419	Panama
Cuba	20	Peru
Czechoslovakia	485	Philippines
Denmark	9,682	Poland
Dominican Republic	2,128	Portugal
Ecuador	981	St. Vincent
Egypt	2,134	Saudi Arabia
El Salvador	309	Singapore
Finland	218	Somalia
France	87,883	South Africa
Gambia	294	Southern Rhodesia
Germany	729,924	Spain
Greece	57,423	Sweden
Guatemala	1,055	Switzerland
		Syria

Guyana	35	Taiwan	11,281
Honduras	892	Tanzania	10,143
Hong Kong	18,200	Thailand	240
Hungary	110	Trinidad & Tobago	131
India	1,687	Turkey	558
Indonesia	804	Turks Islands	3,192
Iran	2,623	United Arab Emirates	3,702
Ireland	10,705	United Kingdom	311,306
Israel	1,067	Uruguay	11,370
Italy	83,243	U.S.S.R.	841
Ivory Coast	119	Venezuela	17,839
Jamaica	1,631	Vietnam	152
Japan	174,587	Yugoslavia	1,023
Jordan	2,343		
Kampuchea	31	Multiple <sup>1</sup>	53,344
Korea (South)	605	Third tier <sup>2</sup>	67,311
Kuwait	1,635		
Laos	31	Subtotal <sup>3</sup>	5,466,269

**Table 2, continued—U.S. agricultural landholdings by country of foreign owner, December 31, 1990**

Country	Acres	Country	Acres
	Number		Number
<b>U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders</b>			
US/Andorra	3,741	US/Kuwait	7,561
US/Argentina	4,255	US/Lebanon	703
US/Australia	1,405	US/Liberia	26,683
US/Austria	19,481	US/Libyan Arab Republic	280
US/Bahamas	71,308	US/Liechtenstein	51,921
US/Barbados	41	US/Luxembourg	232,245
US/Belgium	78,737	US/Malaysia	300
US/Bermuda	38,764	US/Mexico	280,038
US/Brazil	13,915	US/Netherlands	328,774
US/Brit. Virgin Islands	3,110	US/Netherlands Antilles	225,465

US/Canada	1,930,322	US/New Hebrides	2,991
US/Cayman Islands	11,384	US/New Zealand	47,010
US/Chile	9,929	US/Nicaragua	282
US/China	15,018	US/Norway	8,333
US/Colombia	10,154	US/Panama	126,855
US/Costa Rica	407	US/Philippines	7,810
US/Denmark	6,985	US/Portugal	1,683
US/Ecuador	1,632	US/Quatar	219
US/Egypt	1,963	US/Saudi Arabia	19,805
US/El Salvador	533	US/South Africa	4,404
US/Finland	3,107	US/Spain	4,214
US/France	1,040,909	US/Sweden	3,081
US/Germany	428,452	US/Switzerland	288,857
US/Greece	6,817	US/Taiwan	10,990
US/Guatemala	412	US/Thailand	252
US/Guyana	334	US/Trinidad & Tobago	20
US/Honduras	37	US/Turkey	443
US/Hong Kong	130,659	US/United Arab Emirates	2,108
US/Indonesia	197	US/United Kingdom	2,467,464
US/Iran	1,967	US/Uruguay	618
US/Iraq	800	US/Venezuela	37,973
US/Ireland	3,004	US/Multiple	179,503
US/Italy	20,214	US/Third Tier	386,184
US/Japan	364,293	Subtotal <sup>4</sup>	8,979,472
US/Kenya	32		
US/Korea (South)	85	Total all landholdings	14,445,741

<sup>1</sup>A report is processed as "multiple" when no single country predominates for example, an equal partnership between a Canadian and a West German.

<sup>2</sup>A report is processed as "third tier" if three or more levels of ownership are reported with no foreign interests indicated.

<sup>3</sup>Total interests excluding U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders.

<sup>4</sup>Total interest of U.S. corporations with foreign shareholders.

J. Peter DeBraal (202) 219-0425

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES PROGRAM DIFFERENTIALS FOR 1991-CROP COTTON**

**WASHINGTON**, April 16—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today announced schedules of differentials for the 1991 crops of upland and extra-long-staple (ELS) cotton. The schedules are used in making CCC price support loans to farmers.

The same procedures used in 1990 were used to develop the 1991 schedules. The upland cotton procedures were recommended by a study committee, as required by the Agricultural Act of 1949.

The schedule of differentials is applicable to CCC price support loan rates of 50.77 cents per pound for the base grade of upland cotton and 82.99 cents per pound for ELS cotton.

Loan rates for the base grade of upland cotton at each approved warehouse location will also be issued.

Tables of upland and ELS cotton differentials and a schedule of loan rates for individual qualities of 1991 ELS cotton are available from: Cotton, Grains and Rice Price Support Division, Room 3630-S, USDA/ASCS, Washington, D.C. 20013, or by calling Tom Fink (202) 447-8701.

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## **USDA SCIENTISTS AMPLIFY GENETIC SECRETS TO DETECT ANIMAL DISEASES**

**WASHINGTON**—Amplify a radio wave and inaudible signals become sounds, like music or speech. In the same way, a new technology based on a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is amplifying hidden genetic information to reveal animal diseases that have been difficult to detect.

Since the discovery of PCR in 1985, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has been putting the PCR technique to practical use in the laboratory. APHIS also is involved in licensing commercial production of the diagnostic kits that make use of the process.

"Disease organisms may be present in an animal at a very low level, especially in the early stages of infection," says David Espeseth, who heads the licensing division in APHIS. "Detecting these organisms can be

like hunting for a certain piece of a jigsaw puzzle. PCR technology provides a way to amplify the target piece exactly, many times over, so that the chances of finding it are greatly increased."

The technology relies on looking closely into the organism's DNA—its genetic blueprint. Since each blueprint is unique, it reliably reveals the identity of its owner.

"PCR doesn't amplify the entire DNA complement. It focuses on one unique, detectable sequence," Espeseth says. "It's like duplicating just the needed edge of the target puzzle piece. This is speedier and more efficient than old propagation methods that replicated an entire organism."

Once scientists identify the unique sequence that will reliably indicate the presence of the disease organism, they synthesize a complementary DNA sequence—called a DNA probe. If the disease organism is present in a test sample, the targeted sequence will pair with the DNA probe. A color change or radioactive glow built into the DNA probe confirms the disease.

"DNA probes have been used for some years and are extremely accurate," says Espeseth. "The pairing never happens if the disease isn't present. Without amplification, however, DNA probes aren't very sensitive. Amplifying the DNA with PCR techniques produces a very specific and very sensitive test for the presence of animal disease organisms."

Espeseth's group recently licensed the first PCR-based diagnostic test kit, which is now commercially available. It identifies the bacteria responsible for paratuberculosis (or Johne's disease), which is a chronic, contagious, incurable disease of ruminants. The PCR-based test takes 24 hours—much less than the existing test, which depends on bacterial cultures and takes about 10 to 12 weeks.

In the future, PCR tests also promise to support the fight against pseudorabies, a contagious viral disease of swine that spurred American pork producers to call for a nationwide eradication program that began in 1989. Developmental work on PCR is being conducted at the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa.

"Pseudorabies can be carried by an apparently healthy pig, which may suddenly begin to shed the virus, infecting others in the herd," says Jon Katz, who heads a team of APHIS microbiologists at NVSL. "Available diagnostic tests scan for antibodies or infectious viruses but may miss latent infections that will be caught by PCR techniques. The gain in

accuracy could help the swine industry rid itself of the disease more quickly."

At its current stage of development, the PCR technique for pseudorabies testing has a major drawback—it requires brain tissue, which necessitates sacrificing the test animal. Katz says his team is working on an adaptation that would use tonsil tissue instead.

PCR technology also is being adapted for detecting foot-and-mouth disease, one of the world's most destructive illnesses of livestock. This highly contagious viral disease has been successfully kept out of the United States for the last several decades. If the disease ever bypassed APHIS inspectors at the border and started infecting U.S. livestock, APHIS would take prompt countermeasures the success of which would depend on early, accurate detection of the virus.

Richard Meyer is an APHIS microbiologist at Plum Island Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory, located offshore near Orient, N.Y., with highly secure facilities that make it safe to work with exotic disease organisms. Meyer and his coworkers have developed a PCR test for foot-and-mouth disease that can confirm or deny the presence of the disease in a fraction of the usual time. The PCR procedure can be accomplished in a plastic tube, while the confirmatory diagnostic procedure requires sacrificing a live animal.

Despite the promise of PCR procedures, laboratory workers aren't about to throw away their traditional test tubes and culture plates. Even in situations where PCR procedures are practical, they require sophisticated training and equipment, which results in increased operating costs. However, at times, the procedures already offer immediate savings, as in the case of foot-and-mouth disease tests where a plastic tube can replace a cow.

"The scientific community is excited by the potential of PCR techniques," Espeseth says. "We are finding applications in all fields of medical technology where DNA identifications can furnish crucial evidence."

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## **OFFICIAL GRAIN INSPECTION AND WEIGHING SERVICES FEES INCREASED**

**WASHINGTON**, April 17—Effective May 20, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service will increase fees by approximately eight percent for official grain inspection and weighing services performed in the United States.

The increase, which amends the U.S. Grains Standards Act, applies to both contract and noncontract hourly rates for official inspection and weighing services.

Under the act, FGIS is required to charge and collect reasonable fees that cover the estimated costs, including related supervisory and administrative expenses, of performing official inspection, weighing, reinspection, and appeal inspection services.

The fees for these services have not increased since 1987, said FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz. He added that the agency reduced its original proposal for a 13.5-percent increase by implementing severe cost-cutting measures within the agency, including reductions in force and furloughs.

For technical information, contact Allen Atwood, FGIS Regulatory Affairs, (202) 475-3428.

Dana Stewart (202) 382-0378

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## **FGIS ANNOUNCES LABORATORY TESTING REVISIONS**

**WASHINGTON**, April 17—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service is updating and revising its commodity laboratory test fee schedule. The schedule will include important new test services and eliminate infrequently requested services. There will be no net increase in fees for these services, which are performed under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

The current fee schedule is available from FGIS.

According to FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz, the changes are designed to keep pace with industry needs and demonstrate a renewed commitment to providing services at reasonable costs.

"Improved efficiency has enabled us maintain price levels over the past six years on a broad array of tests," Foltz said.

The administrator also indicated that FGIS will continue to offer any of the former tests no longer listed on the new schedule, at the non-contract hourly rate.

Foltz urged wider industry usage of FGIS' Commodity Testing Laboratory located in Beltsville, Md. The facility offers a wide range of analytical test services for grain and oilseed-based processed products at competitive prices.

"We are anxious to work with the grain and food industry to provide the services they need at competitive prices," Foltz added. "We will continue to update and revise our services with our users in mind."

The new commodity laboratory test schedule will become effective today upon publication in the Federal Register.

Written comments can be submitted on or before May 17 to Allen Atwood, USDA Federal Grain Inspection Service, Room 0628-S, P.O. Box 96454, Washington, D.C. 20090-6454. Telecopy users: (202) 447-4628.

Dana Stewart (202) 382-0378

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## FGIS INCREASES RICE INSPECTION FEES

WASHINGTON, April 17—The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service is increasing fees for Federal rice inspection services performed under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

The hourly rate for rice inspection will be incrementally increased by approximately 5 percent immediately, 6 percent in 1993, and 7 percent in 1995. A unit fee of \$.03 per cwt for inspection services performed on sacked rice lots at rest at export locations is also being effected.

"FGIS is required by law to cover, as nearly as practicable, costs for its rice inspection services," said FGIS Administrator John C. Foltz. "This increase and the addition of the unit fee reflects our commitment to seeking a reasonable balance in fulfilling our responsibilities under the law, while attempting to keep costs to producers and the industry at a minimum."

FGIS has not increased rice inspection fees since 1984.

"In the fall of 1990," Foltz said, "FGIS worked closely with members of the Rice Millers' Association to explain the need for an increase in

rice fees and to jointly develop cost cutting measures."

He indicated that joint quarterly meetings are scheduled to review the effectiveness of these cost cutting measures.

The new rice fees will become effective on today upon publication in the Federal Register. Written comments can be submitted on or before May 17, and may be submitted to Allen Atwood, Federal Grain Inspection Service, USDA, Room 0628-S P.O. Box 96454, Washington, DC, 20090-6454. Telex users: (202) 447-4628.

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